



Framework for cooperation
Between
the Executive Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

and

the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) Secretariat
attached to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

This document entitled, "Framework for cooperation between the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat and the SWAC Secretariat" is the follow-up to numerous consultations which were held between these two institutions since July 2004. In October 2004, these consultations resulted in the signing, by the ECOWAS Executive Secretary, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas and the SWAC Director, Mr. Normand Lauzon, of a summary record setting out the areas of cooperation between these two institutions. The continuation of ECOWAS/SWAC cooperation has thus been validated by several summary records and synthesis notes providing detailed information and updates on the joint initiatives.

Since its creation in 1975, ECOWAS' role and mandate have greatly evolved. Initially created to promote regional economic integration, over the last decade ECOWAS has increasingly been solicited to address conflict and tension management issues in the region. Member States have broadened ECOWAS' mandate twice: once in 1999, by the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security; and the second time in 2001, by the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, already ratified by a sufficient number of member States to be applicable. The Supplementary Protocol takes into account a wide range of societal issues: monitoring of elections; poverty reduction; free movement of goods and people; promotion of social dialogue; education; culture and religion; human rights; women, children and youth.

If conflict and crises management occupies a great deal of ECOWAS' energy, the countries of the region now need more than ever a regional economic structure in order to be supported in their development efforts and fight against poverty. Within the context of economic globalisation and the opening of markets where only the great economic blocs can compete on the global market, ECOWAS' role becomes essential as a complementary regional structure to that which is being achieved at the local and national levels.

The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) focuses its efforts on four areas of interest for the region and for the international community. Furthermore, these areas of concentration corresponds to the concerns for the region's future set out notably in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Vision of the African Union, and the partnership agreement recently concluded between the SWAC and ECOWAS Secretariats. These four areas are: (i) Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives; (ii) Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development; (iii) Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration; and (iv) Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security.

Within this context ECOWAS and the SWAC have identified **five areas of cooperation** which have been summarised in this document. In addition to the joint initiatives in each of the four above-mentioned areas, several joint communication **and information** initiatives will be promoted.

While contributing to mobilising Africans and making their voices heard in various fora, by playing an advocacy role and promoting exchanges within and outside the region on the desirable and possible futures for West Africa, the Club Secretariat directly supports ECOWAS' action, without being an international development financing agency. The partnership between the Club and ECOWAS aims to help move the development agenda forward to the benefit of the greatest number of people.

I. Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives

Five strategic questions structure the consultation process, analysis and debate on the development perspectives of the region:

- Where is West Africa coming from?
- Where is it today?
- What are the desirable and possible futures for the region?
- What new partnerships should be set up for a better future for the region?
- How should ECOWAS' role evolve within the regional, continental and global context and in complementarity with other regional, continental and international organisations?

These five questions are linked to two other vital questions for the development of the region: Where and how are the 430 million West Africans going to live in 2020, which is approximately 130 million more people than there are today? What is the future for those under twenty years of age who make up approximately 55% of the total population?

1.1 Main joint achievements to date

In 2005, the main joint achievements were:

- Co-production of an analytical review of 150 retrospective and prospective studies of interest for West Africa: The objective of this review was to compile the dynamics of change, challenges, risks, major trends and strategic visions drawn from the retrospective and prospective studies of past decades likely to shed light on the strategic thinking on the region's future. From this work, the SWAC prepared a synthesis document on its perception of the region, regional integration and ECOWAS' role, which served as a reference for the Symposium (see below).
- For ECOWAS' 30th anniversary, a Symposium on the Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives of the Region and ECOWAS was co-organised with ECOWAS in May 2005. Within this context, a panel representative of all levels of society from the 15 ECOWAS member countries met in Abuja. The Symposium's main objectives were to: 1) exchange views on the regional dynamics in West Africa; and 2) identify the main issues likely to serve as a basis for further strategic thinking on the possible and desirable futures for the region and the evolution of ECOWAS' role within the framework of the regional integration process.
- Presentation of the Synthesis Report of the Symposium to ECOWAS Heads of State at its Summit held in Niamey in January 2006: This report highlights several strategic issues of interest for the medium- and long-term development of the region as well as ECOWAS. Some priority themes at the regional level were identified for 2006 and beyond: food security challenges, migration and youth employment, the role of civil society actors, notably that of women and youth.

1.2 Joint future initiatives

ECOWAS/SWAC joint dissemination of the Symposium Report "Development Perspectives of the Region, Regional Integration and the Evolution of ECOWAS' role".

As from the beginning of 2007, ECOWAS and the SWAC co-production of an Annual Report on West Africa which will be comprised of three parts: 1) the first part will contain an analytical review of the region and the evolution of the economic, social, political, institutional, etc. situation; 2) the second part will compile a synthesis of the debates, decisions and actions on the key issues related to medium- and long-term development of the region and, in 2007, on the topics identified above; 3) the third part will assemble independent contributions on issues of interest for the region's future. The African Development Bank (ADB) will be invited to participate in the drafting of this Report with which other partners will also be associated.

Consultations will be held between ECOWAS and the SWAC on follow-up to the Symposium, the Report's contents, topics to address and the future of the Panel's role.

Co-organisation at OECD Headquarters of an information workshop on NEPAD: strategies, action plan, implementation and financing of various field-level initiatives and their impact on development in the region. This workshop should help clarify NEPAD's objectives and *modus operandi* and its contribution to the building of Africa while taking into account the necessary complementarities of what can be done at various levels: local, national, regional and continental. For strengthening aid effectiveness, it will also assist development partners in identifying opportunities for coherent policies, programmes and partnerships.

Development of the private sector and the promotion of south-south cooperation: over the last three decades the informal and formal private sector has undergone immense changes and has played a driving role in the socio-economic development of the region. South-south cooperation has become a major stake as regards sub-regional investment. Several years ago governments in the region realized that a dynamic and competitive private sector is essential in order to stimulate economic growth and increased revenues for the population.

Despite progress made, there is still much improvement needed and changes to be introduced at various levels: policy and socio-political; building an open and dynamic regional market; tax; support of financial/banking institutions and regional and national insurance companies; investment conditions in a secure climate and increased confidence; basic socio-economic infrastructure such as education, health, transportation and communications; transparency within management; accountable governance at the business-level; productive reinvestment of profits, revenues, and transfers of funds by members of the diaspora; better understanding of the role of the informal economy and adoption of policies and support measures. ECOWAS and the SWAC will work together over the next years on private sector development in areas of strategic importance for the region, notably on the promotion of investments targeted towards sustainable development. A similar approach will be adopted with the goal of strengthening south-south cooperation.

II. Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development

2.1 Main achievements to date

The joint initiatives launched in the following areas by the SWAC and ECOWAS over the last months are perfectly in line with the cooperation programme set up in 2004 between the two organisations:

Agricultural and Trade Policies: The Club Secretariat works with ECOWAS on the implementation of ECOWAP and the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) as well as other crucial issues such as agricultural biotechnology and its impact on agricultural development in the region.

Food Security: Concerning the recent ongoing food crisis in several countries in the region, in October 2005, the Club, ECOWAS and the CILSS co-organised a Forum on the medium- and long-term challenges for food security in West Africa. A meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) was organised during the first semester of 2006 to which ECOWAS was invited. In addition to reviewing the implementation situation of various recommendations related to food security set forth since 2000, this was an opportunity to examine the impact of the avian flu on food security.

Desert Locusts: In the same vein, the Club responded to the calls of West African partners by organising an international meeting in September 2004 on the medium- and long-term challenges of the desert locust outbreak in West Africa.

Cotton: The SWAC Secretariat recently produced a report entitled, "The Economic and Social Importance of Cotton in West Africa: the Role of Cotton in Regional Development Trade and Livelihoods".

Land, conflict and agricultural transformation in West Africa: In 2005, the SWAC launched an analysis on the relationship between land and conflict and their consequences on agricultural transformation based on the cases of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. This work aimed to highlight the regional dimensions of land issues in relation to conflict and the transformation process within a historic perspective. It was complemented by a review on land reform processes in all ECOWAS countries, as well as Chad, Mauritania and Cameroon.

All of these joint initiatives have been closely followed by the SWAC's Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit.

2.2 Joint future initiatives

In addition to the joint initiatives described above, there will be follow-up to strategic thinking and new joint (SWAC/ECOWAS) initiatives will be undertaken regarding several topics, such as:

Agricultural and Trade Policies: Over the medium- and long-term, SWAC/ECOWAS joint strategic thinking will be based on the main issue of building and strengthening a West African regional market, as well as the impact of emerging countries (in particular, China and India) on this market. Strategic thinking will also continue to be carried out in other areas of interest for the region such as the implementation of ECOWAP and the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) as well as agricultural biotechnology policies and their impact on agricultural development in the region.

Food security: Within the framework of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN), the SWAC and ECOWAS in association with the CILSS, the WAEMU and ROPPA will carry out further strategic thinking on the prevention and sustainable management of food crises in the Sahel and West Africa. Furthermore, the SWAC and ECOWAS will work on a strategy to ensure sustainable food security in West Africa based on the CILSS mechanism and in reference to the objectives set out in the ECOWAP framework.

Desert Locusts: As from 2007, the SWAC and ECOWAS will join efforts with the CILSS to seek early warning, monitoring and response systems for the desert locust which should lead to the development of a regional strategy document on this sector. This document, accompanied by an action plan for its implementation will serve as the basis for a consultation process at ministerial level with a view to adopting a regional policy in 2007.

Cotton: This topic will remain a priority for the SWAC in the years to come, notably as concerns the transformation potentialities and the medium- and long-term economic development opportunities in this sector. ECOWAS will be involved in this strategic thinking.

Livestock Development Perspectives in West Africa: This initiative emphasises the economic and social importance of transhumant pastoralism and the role of livestock breeding in food security and the improvement of livelihoods in rural areas. Close cooperation between the SWAC and ECOWAS with other partners such as the CILSS, the WAEMU and ROPPA is foreseen in this area and will include the implementation of the initiative on "Challenges and opportunities of livestock rearing in the Sahel and West Africa" within the framework of the ECOWAS Pastoralism Programme.

Land, conflict and agricultural transformation in West Africa: By the end of 2006, ECOWAS and the CILSS will co-organise a forum on the "*Policies and land reforms in the Sahel and West Africa*". This action which falls within the framework of the African Initiative (African Union, African Development Bank, and the Economic Commission for Africa) on land, will enable land policy framework objectives for the region to be defined. The SWAC will actively participate in this strategic thinking.

Agro Food-Transformation: This issue remains central and plays a key role not only in the building of a regional market, but above all in the access to West African agricultural products on the international market. In the medium-term, under the auspices of ECOWAS in partnership with the CILSS, ROPPA the WAEMU and the INTERFACE network, regional strategic thinking will be organised on the "*Relaunching Strategies of the Agro-Food Transformation sector in the Sahel and West Africa with a view to strengthening the regional food products market*" with which the SWAC will be associated.

Rural Transformation, sustainable development and strengthening the regional market: Jointly with ECOWAS, the SWAC has launched strategic thinking on the medium- and long-term development perspectives of the region. This prospective strategic thinking will be continued with the ECOWAS Agricultural Department on the following topics:

- **Rural Transformation**: perspectives and challenges by the year 2025;
- **Aquaculture and sustainable management of fishery resources**: The management of fisheries and development of aquaculture in West Africa is a new component of the SWAC's Programme of Work. It aims to identify the challenges of sustainable management of fishery resources and the opportunities, notably the role of the private sector, in the promotion of sustainable aquaculture in order to better manage these resources for the West African population by the year 2025. The FAO could be associated with this important issue concerning the future of the region and which is also in line with the concerns defined in ECOWAP.

In the medium-term, SWAC/ECOWAS joint strategic thinking with some partners like the FAO, will be based on, in particular, the challenges and opportunities of aquaculture as regards strengthening the regional market, food security and poverty reduction in West Africa.

All of these SWAC/ECOWAS joint initiatives could also lead to the organisation of workshops or a Forum at the regional level.

III. Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration

3.1 Cross-border Initiatives Programme (C.I.P.)

3.1.1 Main achievements to date

In accordance with what had been decided in October 2004, ECOWAS hosted the second WABI network workshop at the end of October 2004 which was co-organised by the SWAC Secretariat. The launching of the Cross-border Initiatives Programme was announced at this workshop which was then the subject of the first memorandum submitted to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ECOWAS member States in January 2005 in Accra.

In 2005, two pilot operations were defined within the framework of workshops bringing together local actors in cross-border areas of the region with the support of notably the MDP¹, UNOWA² and UNDP³; a first draft of a regional legal convention was drawn up by ECOWAS with the SWAC's support. In January 2006, the ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting in Niamey asked the Executive Secretariat to find the necessary means to rapidly develop and expand cross-border cooperation in West Africa. Two new pilot cross-border cooperation initiatives are in the process of being launched, notably in collaboration with the GRDR⁴ and the CILSS.

ECOWAS member State governments and other regional organisations have confirmed increased commitment to this issue:

- The governments of Senegal, The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau have officially asked UNDP to finance the cross-border cooperation pilot operation in "Sénégalie méridionale".
- The Gambian government has designated a focal point for the CIP's implementation.
- The Ministers of Regional Planning of Mali and Burkina Faso personally attended the three day workshop at which the pilot operation in the Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso zone was launched. At the request of these two governments, UNDP has agreed to finance this pilot operation.
- The government of Niger expressed its willingness to set up cross-border pilot operations.
- The Integration Week 2006 of Mali will focus on cross-border cooperation.
- The WAEMU and the CILSS have integrated cross-border cooperation into their strategies.
- The next Summit of African locally-elected officials "AFRICITES" (Nairobi, September 2006) will consist of one working session on cross-border cooperation.

Development partners are progressively committed to supporting this Programme:

- Canada and Austria have co-financed, along with the SWAC, a workshop launching the pilot operation in "Sénégalie méridionale". IDRC is financing the publication of a book on the analysis and perspective of cross-border cooperation in West Africa on the basis of our field work.
- The UNOWA has also actively participated in the workshop launching the pilot operation in Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso.
- The UNDP offices in Ouagadougou and Bamako are financing (\$160 000) a support programme for the Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso pilot operation.

¹ Municipal Development Partnership of West and Central Africa.

² United Nations Office for West Africa.

³ United Nations Development Program.

⁴ Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural.

- The GTZ is involved in the implementation of the "Sénégal méridionale" pilot project.
- The European Delegation in Nouakchott is cofinancing a pilot operation in the Karakoro basin (Mali – Mauritania) in the amount of 45 000 €, as well as the *Comité Catholique contre la Faim et le Développement* (CCFD) in the amount of 10 000 €. Cross-border cooperation has been integrated into the planning of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) in Mauritania; we hope that this will soon be the same for Mali.
- The Director General in charge of development at the European Commission recently confirmed, by letter to our partners at the European Association of Border Regions (AEBR), its availability to finance a substantial cross-border cooperation programme in West Africa.
- The WFP, UNICEF and OCHA are undertaking joint work on cross-border food security working with the SWAC and the CILSS.

This Programme is perfectly in line with ECOWAS' strategic approach aiming to better anchor its action in realities on the ground and to respond concretely to the concerns of populations in the region as regards regional cooperation. At the meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs in January 2006 in Niamey. *"The Ministers noted the progress accomplished in the implementation of the programme and asked the Executive Secretariat to intensify its efforts"*. Moreover, at the meeting it was recommended that *"the programmes not be limited to specific zones but that they cover all member States"*.

One of the most important stakes is thus to provide the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat with more significant means to respond to this demand made by ECOWAS authorities.

3.1.2 Joint future initiatives

Implementation of a jointly defined operation plan for 2006

In the short-term, ECOWAS and the SWAC will continue to implement a jointly defined operation plan for 2006. As a reminder, this plan includes the following components:

- Follow-up to the implementation of the Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso pilot operation.
- Follow-up to the implementation of the "Sénégal méridionale" pilot operation.
- Finalisation of the legal convention and organisation by ECOWAS of a meeting of experts from member States concerning this project for validation and transmission to statutory bodies.
- Launching new pilot operations. Among the courses of action identified at the beginning of 2006, two pilot operations have been confirmed: 1) in the Kano – Katsina – Maradi zone in the area of food security and, 2), in the Mali – Mauritania border zone in the Karakoro basin in collaboration with the GRDR.
- Integration of the socio-economic development project in the cross-border zone Burkina Faso – Ghana eradicated from onchocerciasis into the CIP; programme led by ECOWAS and carried out by the FAO with financing from Belgium.

In order to implement these activities, the two Secretariats have undertaken to set up a permanent mutual communication and information flow on all of their activities related to cross-border cooperation. ECOWAS informed the SWAC that it has approached its donors with a view to being provided with complementary human resources in order for it to respond to the challenges of expanding the CIP as requested by the statutory bodies on January 2006.

Preparation of a programme to expand cross-border cooperation in West Africa

On the basis of the achievements and encouraging perspectives as set out in the preceding points, ECOWAS and the SWAC will launch two complementary processes aiming to bringing cross-border cooperation to the forefront within ECOWAS and in West Africa:

- Re-organising the cross-border cooperation dossier within the Executive Secretariat aims to position this dossier within the framework of ECOWAS' operational projects. ECOWAS indeed implements a large number of programmes which are, in fact, cross-border programmes but which do not integrate this aspect enough. The objective is to be able to focus on some border areas as regards the actions and results of these projects (shared border posts, transhumance corridors, health monitoring, shared management of socio-economic infrastructure, community radio⁵, etc.) while developing direct dialogue with local actors.
- Preparing and holding the first Europe-Africa Conference on cross-border cooperation which could take place in Accra in June 2007. This Conference could be co-organised by ECOWAS, the SWAC and the AEBR to which its Executive Committee has already agreed. This Conference could be an important step in building a political stratum and implementing financial and legal tools of cross-border cooperation in West Africa. Technical analyses, feasibility studies and significant lobbying will enable draft decisions, confirmed action proposals and commitments to be put on the table.

At the end of the Conference, ECOWAS and the SWAC will examine together the new perspectives of their collaboration as regards cross-border cooperation.

3.2 Atlas on Regional Integration

3.2.1 Main achievements to date

As concerns the Atlas on Regional Integration, in 2005 the SWAC and ECOWAS produced all of the chapters on transportation and telecommunications. Also, in 2005, some financing was mobilised for the Atlas.

During the first semester of 2006, the work on the Vulnerable Sahelian zones, migration, cotton, shared water basins, populations, languages and health chapters has been carried out by the SWAC and should be available during the year, after validation by ECOWAS.

Furthermore, a draft electronic Atlas has been created and will be available on the website (<http://www.atlas-ouestafrique.org/>) after its validation by ECOWAS.

3.2.2 Future joint initiatives

Besides the chapters cited above, the topics of the media, cacao/coffee, water and higher education will be examined in 2006.

The follow-up to this joint exercise could be a joint evaluation by the SWAC and ECOWAS at the beginning of 2007 based on the following questions:

- Are the Atlas products relevant for ECOWAS and West Africa?
- Can the placement of the Atlas within the Executive Secretariat be improved?
- How can a structural link be established between strategic thinking/planning within ECOWAS and the Atlas?

⁵ An experience is underway in the Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso zone with support by the MDP.

At the end of this joint evaluation, of which the modalities need to be defined, ECOWAS and the SWAC will together examine the new perspectives of their collaboration regarding this subject.

IV. Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security

Concerning governance, conflict dynamics, peace and security, the partnership between the SWAC and ECOWAS has developed over 2005 with active collaboration in three main areas for which there will be follow-up activities within the framework of the following initiatives:

4.1 Dynamics of exit from crisis and reform of the security sector

4.1.1 Main achievements to date

The partnership between the SWAC and ECOWAS has been strengthened through various initiatives on the dynamics of exit from crisis and reform of the security sector in West Africa.

This was illustrated by the diversity of the participants at the Bissau Workshop held in November 2005 on "The place of political dialogue in the exit from crisis process and democratic governance of the security sector in West Africa". This meeting gave way to a recommendation to set up three working groups at the regional level on political dialogue, the history of deep-seated causes of conflict, and the DDR.

4.1.2 Joint initiatives in 2006 and beyond

The SWAC organised several thematic meetings with which ECOWAS has been involved:

- Regional workshop (Lomé, 28 to 30 March) on "*Human Security in West Africa: Challenges, Synergies and Actions for a Regional Agenda*". ECOWAS was involved in the support of this work and will be involved in its follow-up. ECOWAS made an intervention on its strategy, approach and the various measures envisaged or underway in dealing with the avian flu as well as disaster prevention and management. ECOWAS also made a presentation on the progress made regarding the protection of populations and the maintenance of peace at the regional level.
- Meeting in May 2006 in Abidjan to set up and launch the work of a regional working group on the DDR and post-conflict management in West Africa.
- Initiatives promoting civil-military dialogue and for the development approach to human security in countries of the region which are in a dynamic of exit from crisis. ECOWAS will contribute to facilitating the involvement of various actors.
- Capitalisation by actors in the region on ECOWAS' early-warning system in support of the approaches and preventative actions of conflict.

This work will contribute to the implementation of the recommendation by the Security and Defence Commission (SDC) concerning "the need to harmonise the DDR programmes" in the region.

4.2 Governance and democracy

4.2.1 Main achievements to date

Concerning the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, joint Action Plans concerning its ratification and implementation were developed by a working group chaired by the late General Diarra, on 3 and 4 March 2005 and composed of members and Heads of the SWAC and ECOWAS.

Implementing the conclusions of this meeting has enabled closer collaboration with the SWAC and ECOWAS on work undertaken on raising awareness, dissemination and advocacy in support of the ratification, appropriation and implementation of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. There are now nine countries (previously four) that have ratified this Protocol. The Protocol is thus integrally applicable to all ECOWAS countries but raising awareness and advocating for its appropriation must be followed up with various actors.

The late General DIARRA, representing the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat had the opportunity to promote the Supplementary Protocol at the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society which was held in June 2005 in Cotonou. The Acts of this Forum are dedicated to his memory.

ECOWAS has been associated with the workshops held in Bissau and Conakry with WANSED (West African Network on Security and Democratic Governance) which contributed to promoting the Protocol leading to its implementation and the democratic governance of the security sector in West Africa.

4.2.2 Joint future initiatives in 2006 and beyond

- Awareness raising workshop for ECOWAS Parliamentarians in collaboration with WANSED aiming to strengthen the initiatives promoting the Supplementary Protocol.
- Joint initiatives on publication, capitalisation and dissemination of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.
- Combined awareness-raising and advocating actions for the ratification of the Protocol by countries which have not yet done so.
- Meeting in Niamey at end-April 2006 on the topic "Women and conflict prevention endogenous mechanisms and governance in West Africa" in preparation for the "Inter-generational Forum on Endogenous Governance" to be held in Ouagadougou in June 2006 with the participation of concerned ECOWAS Departments and actors of the region.
- Joint strategic thinking on "Youth, Migration and Governance" at the regional level.
- A concerted intervention, within initiatives related to migration and free circulation in the region.

4.3 Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa

4.3.1 Main achievements to date

The SWAC has worked closely with ECOWAS on this initiative which has enabled a fruitful dialogue between social and political actors from the region coming from 15 ECOWAS member States, Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon.

The 300 participants met for the first time representing 72 political parties from the majority and the opposition, 72 representatives from diverse sectors of civil society, and 32 representatives from the media in addition to various actors coming from State institutions and development partners. ECOWAS contributed 50 000 USD to this Forum.

The impact of this meeting on the decompartmentalisation and bringing actors into dialogue has been significant. In Guinea, the Forum has been followed-up by a joint restitution of all the social and political actors who seem obviously determined to keep the spirit of the Forum alive at the national level.

The Acts of the Forum, edited and published in French and in English, are being widely distributed to actors in the region.

4.3.2 Joint initiatives in 2006 and beyond

This Forum's relevance, success and impact, bringing together, with ECOWAS, actors highly involved in the building of peace and democracy, has led to the proposal that ECOWAS take up and assume in collaboration and with the SWAC's support, the periodic holding of the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa.

This Forum will thus become a permanent platform for political dialogue and synergise actors of the region in order to face together the major challenges concerning the building and strengthening of civil peace and democracy.

The consultations led to the following decisions:

- Co-organisation by ECOWAS and the SWAC Secretariat, as from 2007, of a Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa;
- Setting up a permanent Forum Secretariat composed of both ECOWAS and SWAC Secretariat staff;
- Follow-up of the Forum's restitution and impact within ECOWAS member States;
- Setting up a strategic thinking Commission for the Forum's next session (timing, topic, objectives and expected results).

V. Communication

5.1 Main achievements to date

In October 2004, ECOWAS and the SWAC agreed to develop joint communications initiatives which would go beyond the exchange of documents between the two organisations; with the aim of strengthening ECOWAS' visibility regionally and internationally and, namely within OECD Member countries as well as to support the SWAC Secretariat's advocacy role in the promotion of West Africa.

5.2 Joint future initiatives

The publication of joint information notes and declarations on issues of regional interest.

The SWAC will continue to play an advocacy role in the promotion of the region and ECOWAS to OECD Member countries and development partners.

The SWAC will contribute on a regular basis to the ECOWAS Newsletter as regards keeping its readers informed on the SWAC's actions and the evolution of its joint initiatives with ECOWAS.

In Abuja, ECOWAS and the SWAC agreed to create a joint internet site with information supplied by both organisations. This joint site should provide more qualitative reliable sectoral and global information on the region. Consultations will be held between ECOWAS and the SWAC on the site's target audience, its main objectives, its contents and links to other sites as well as its management. This site should be operational as from 2007 and will be developed over a three-year period using a modular, iterative and participative approach.

VI. Implementation modalities

Joint initiatives underway between ECOWAS and the SWAC will be included in both the SWAC's and ECOWAS' annual Programme of Work.

Joint fundraising will be undertaken on the basis of joint initiatives requiring additional funding.

Concerning the implementation of this framework for cooperation, ECOWAS and the SWAC agree to the following:

- Organise an annual meeting between the two institutions with an aim to examining the attained results; agree, in a flexible manner, on the priority activities; the modalities of the implementation of these activities as well as the role and responsibilities of each party in view of achieving the expected results which will benefit the populations of the region;
- Mutual and regular exchange of documentation;
- Association of other partners within the framework of the implementation of joint initiatives ;
- Joint agreement on the people within each organisation responsible for the implementation and follow-up of joint initiatives.

The SWAC and ECOWAS will together hold the intellectual property rights stemming from this work jointly carried out. Furthermore, the parties will together decide and control the dissemination of this joint work.

The SWAC and ECOWAS agree that this framework for cooperation shall be in force for a period of five (5) years and that adjustments may be made in relation to the situation and needs on the ground. If one party wishes to terminate this framework, it shall notify the other party three months in advance.

This framework does not include any financial commitment or obligation by either of the parties. This is a partnership framework with a view to strengthening already existing collaboration between the two parties.

Date :

22 11.06



Mr. Normand LAUZON

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Date :

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